

WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM EDUCATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS GROUP

BREAKOUT OF P.R. AND TRAINING FROM GROUPS' "MESSAGES"

Public Relations Messages

Basic question:

Where do we get water from, how do we use it and where does it go?

Key questions:

(These beg the question of "Who decides?" Nationally and internationally a looming question, balancing government versus social concerns. Do people prioritize, does government do so by fiat?):

- **How can the system be managed to maximize positive economic, social and environmental impacts?**
- **What uses are priority?**
- **What uses are preferred?**
- **How much water do we lose, and how?**

- What uses are exempted during times of water shortage, and why?
- Water Rights: Who owns the water?
 - Summary of rights (common law, state law, concept of reasonable use)
- What is the cost of the full cycle of water?
 - Publicly-supplied water and wastewater
 - Self-supply (private wells)
 - Making sense of water bills
- The importance of conservation messages
 - Example: every dollar saved in water represents savings to **dispose** of it (*Key word is dispose. If water is so valuable, why are we disposing of it?*)
- What is recycled or reclaimed water?
- Understand the system interactions between water supply, land development, the environment and the well being of Rhode Islanders

Basics for Ed and P.R. Committee:

How would water allocation affect families, businesses, etc.? Answer "So what?"

What are lessons learned in the rest of the world?

"Three barks" and "Three Cs" – Messages clear, concise, and consistent

Other thoughts:

Harness the power of consumer choice in favor of conservation.

Blend consumer education and advocacy with market incentives and disincentives.

- Market mechanisms
- Eco-labels

Education and Training Needs

- **Educate the suppliers; standardize bills**
 - **Provide electronic template for suppliers** (Suggestion here for p.r. side to devise a simplified bill to visibly contrast with current unintelligible, non-uniform bills to give legislators to show how it could all be much easier to understand if it were law to have standard template.)
 - **Use bill stuffers or brochures like the CCR**
 - **Add conservation messages on bills, water use statistics, best management practices, etc.**
- **Educate the legislature about measures needed to avoid allocating water in the future**
- **Raise public and legislative awareness and understanding of hydrology** (both surface and ground water).
- **Targeted education/outreach and technical assistance through the Cooperative Extension and others to educate/train local decision makers**
- **Understanding the Regulatory Authority Process**
 - **Target audiences:** the public, legislators, ABA-RI, municipal government
 - **Interactive web tool or brochure for diagrams, laws, regulations**
- **Build awareness regarding water availability in context with local land use decisions**
 - **Constituencies include:** planners, local officials, developers, consultants, land use attorneys and watershed councils
 - **Training in regional planning**
 - **Changes in zoning and subdivision regs**

Data-gathering subset

(On p.r. side, need to explain why this data matters in practical terms to justify costs.

Example: If not enough gauges on Pawtuxet River, homeowners in between monitoring points may not know if water quality is up to par.)

- **How can water-use reporting help support sustainable growth of the state?**
- **Educate the legislature regarding the need for data** (stream gages, observation wells)

In-House WA work to do:

- **Analysis of water resource management spending by [state] entity and category**
- **Strategies for funding and pooling resources to implement water allocation program priorities**
 - **Price programs**
 - **Nonprice programs**